

WOE-VINE, A PARASITIC WEED

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Woe-vine, *Cassytha filiformis* L., is a parasitic vine on both herbaceous and woody plants. This vine can be found in coastal sand dunes, hammocks, scrub, and pinelands from peninsular Florida to the Florida Keys (4). The woe-vine's slender, leafless stems of yellow-green to orange-brown are unpleasantly conspicuous, often cover shrubs like a shroud, and hang in tangled orange-brown masses from the branches (1) (Fig. 1). Once *Cassytha* establishes itself in the canopy of a tree, it severs connection with the ground and obtains food and water through haustoria (suckers) penetrating the bark and twigs. Prolonged infestations will eventually stunt the host plant (2).

Cassytha or woe-vine is often mistaken for dodder, *Cuscuta* sp., both being parasitic on their hosts and resembling each other in general appearance. Woe-vine belongs to the laurel family (Lauraceae) whereas dodder belongs to the morning-glory family (Convolvulaceae). Woe-vine can be differentiated from dodder on the basis of the following characteristics: (1) woe-vine is a perennial while dodder is an annual, and (2) the strand-like stems of woe-vine are smooth (2, 3).

CONTROL. There is no satisfactory control for this parasitic vine. In trees with light infestations, pruning of affected branches may provide a satisfactory control while hat-racking could be more practical for those that are heavily infested. With smaller plants, roguing and destruction of host and woe-vine are suggested.



Fig. 1. Woe-vine, *Cassytha filiformis* L., parasitizing an unidentified tree.

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